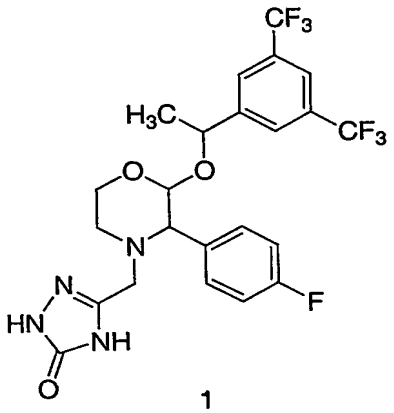
WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

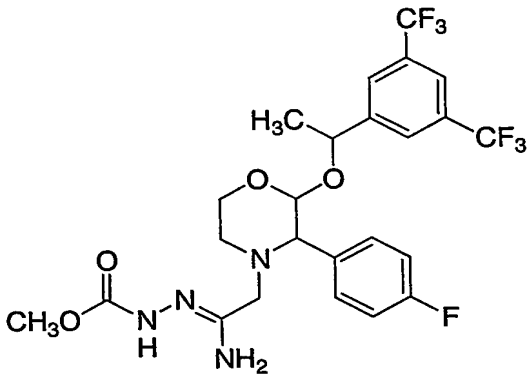
1. A process for preparing a compound of formula 1:



1

comprising:

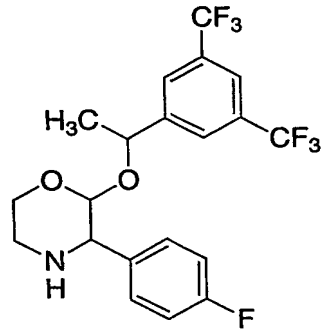
cyclizing a compound of formula 4:



4

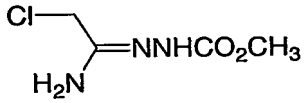
at a temperature of 140-150°C to produce the compound of formula 1.

2. The process of Claim 1 which further comprises reacting the hydrochloride salt of a compound of formula 2:



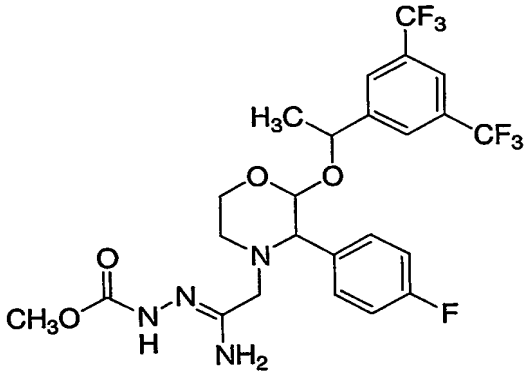
2

in the presence of an inorganic base and toluene with a compound of the formula 3:



3

to produce the compound of formula 4:



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3. The process of Claim 2 wherein the compound of formula 2 is reacted with the compound of formula 3 in the presence of an inorganic base, toluene and a polar aprotic solvent.

4. The process of Claim 3 wherein the polar aprotic solvent is selected from the group consisting of: dimethylformamide, dimethylsulfoxide, N-methylpyrrolidone, acetonitrile, N,N-dimethylacetamide and hexamethylphosphoramide.

5. The process of Claim 4 wherein the polar aprotic solvent is dimethylformamide or dimethylsulfoxide.

6. The process of Claim 1 further comprising washing the compound of formula 4 prior to cyclization with an aqueous phase.

7. The process of Claim 6 wherein the aqueous phase comprises an aqueous salt solution.

8. The process of Claim 5 wherein the aqueous salt solution contains at least one compound selected from the group consisting of: KCl, $KHCO_3$, K_2CO_3, Na_2CO_3, $NaHCO_3$ and NaCl,

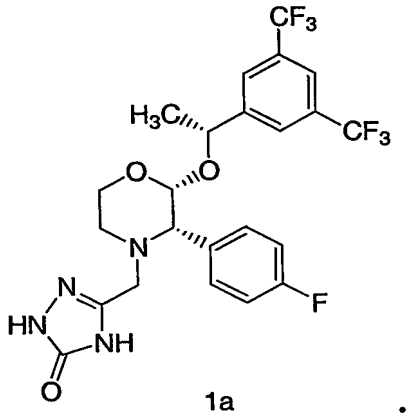
9. The process of Claim 8 wherein the aqueous salt solution contains KCl.

10. The process of Claim 1 further comprising drying prior to cyclization.

11. The process of Claim 2 wherein the inorganic base is selected from the group consisting of: sodium carbonate, cesium carbonate, sodium hydroxide, potassium hydroxide and potassium carbonate.

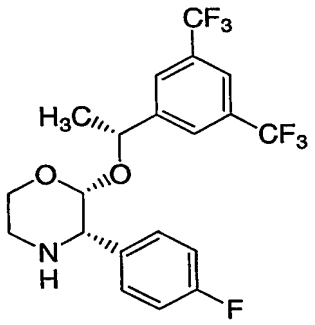
12. The process of Claim 7 wherein the inorganic base is potassium carbonate.

13. The process of Claim 1 wherein the compound of formula 1 is of the formula 1a:



1a

14. The process of Claim 2 wherein compound 2 is a compound of the formula 2a:



2a